

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above referenced application in view of the enclosed amendments and remarks is requested. Claims 1-37 remain in the application.

ARGUMENT

Claims 1-7, 9-10, 13-15, 17-21, 23, 25, 29-31, and 34 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over McDonough (US 6,714,982) in view of Namba (US 5,996,448).

The Examiner relies on McDonough to support an obviousness rejection of claims 1-7, 9-10, 13-15, 17-21, 23, 25, 29-31, and 34. McDonough has an effective date of January 19, 2000. Enclosed is a 37 CFR 1.131 affidavit signed by the Applicant which asserts a date of conception of the present invention prior to January 19, 2000, along with diligence until a constructive reduction to practice on June 27, 2000. The effect of this affidavit is the removal of the McDonough reference as prior art for the present application. Without reliance on McDonough, the present rejections of claims 1-7, 9-10, 13-15, 17-21, 23, 25, 29-31, and 34 cannot stand and must be withdrawn.

Thus, claims 1-7, 9-10, 13-15, 17-21, 23, 25, 29-31, and 34 are allowable as presented. Accordingly, all claims dependent from independent claims 1, 9, and 17 are also allowable.

Claims 3, 11, 22, and 24 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over McDonough in view of Namba, and further in view of Wood (US 6,691,232).

These claims are allowable based on their dependency from their respective allowable independent claims.

Claims 8, 16, and 32 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over McDonough in view of Namba, and further in view of Jaamies (US 6,138,037).

These claims are allowable based on their dependency from their respective allowable independent claims.

Claims 12 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over McDonough in view of Namba, and further in view of Kung (US 5,434,918).

Claim 12 is allowable because it depends from allowable independent claim 9.

Claims 26-28, and 35-37 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over McDonough in view of Namba, and further in view of McCurley, US patent application publication 2003/0167403).

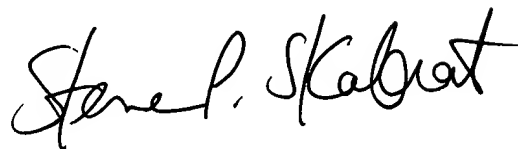
McDonough has been removed as a prior art reference. Without McDonough, the rejection of claims 26-28 and 35-37 cannot stand. These claims are allowable as presented.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Claims 1-37 are all in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (503) 264-8074. Early issuance of Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

s/Steven P. Skabrat/
Reg. No. 36,279
Senior Attorney
Intel Corporation
(503) 264-8074



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c/o Blakely, Sokoloff, Taylor &
Zafman, LLP
12400 Wilshire Blvd.
Seventh Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90025-1026

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